

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SOVIET ACADEMY OF SCIENCES CELEBRATES ITS 250TH ANNIVERSARY

1. SUMMARY. SOVIET ACADEMY SCEINCES (AN) CELEBRATED ITS 250TH ANNIVERRSARY WITH FESTIVITIES OCTOBER 7-15. MAJOR POLITICAL HIGHPOINT WAS PROVIDED BY BREZHNEV SPEECH WHICH ELABORATED DIRECTIONS THAT AN SHOULD TAKE (LESS FUNDAMENTAL, MORE APPLIED RESEARCH), AND - IN LINE WITH SUSLOV' MAY SPEECH TO TH AN - INDICATED INTENTION TO STRENGTHEN PARTY CONTROL OVER ACADEMY. NOT SURPRISINGLY, OTHER SPEECHES ECHOED BREZHNEV'S LINE. AN SEEMS SET TO LOSE SOME MEASURE OF THE RELATIVE AUTONOMY WHICH IT HAS THUS FAR ENJOYED, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE STILL SOME PROBLEMS OF CONTROL FACING THE KREMLIN. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SOVIET ACADEMY CELEBRATED OCTOBER 7 THROUGH 15 ITS 250TH ANNIVERSARY. THIS EVENT HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN SCHEDULED SOME 15 MONTHS AGO BUT WAS POSTPONED. THE JUBILEE SCHEDULE INCLUDED EVENTS IN BOTH MOSCOW AND LENIGRAD (WHERE THE AN REMAINED UNTIL 1934). THE FESTIVITIES WERE MARKED ON THE SCIETIFIC SIDE BY PRESENTATIONS ON SUBJECTS IN THE PHYSICAL, CHEMICAL, EARTH AND SOCIAL SCIENCES BY SOVIET ACADEMICIANS. A LARGE NUMBER OF HIGH-LEVEL FOREIGN SCIENTISTS WAS INVITED TO ATTEND (INCLUDING QUITE A FEW NOBEL LAUREATES AND 23 AMERICAN SCIENTISTS). THE PROGRAM
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INCLUDED THE USUAL RECEPTIONS AND CONCERTS AS WELL AS VISITS TO

VARIOUS AN FACILITIES NEAR MOSCOW.

3. THE MAJOR POLITICAL EVENT OF THE FESTIVITIES WAS BREZHNEV'S ADDRESS TO BLUE-RIBBON PARTY/STATE/SCIENTIFIC AUDIENCE ON OCTOBER 7 (TEXT IN OCTOBER 8 PRAVDA, WE ASSUME FBIS CARRIED) WHICH SET THE TONE FOR THE REST OF THE SPEAKERS. BREZHNEV MADE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS: SCIENTIFIC WORK MUST BE SUBORDINATED TO TASK OF IMPLEMENTING SOCIALISM; SOVIET SCIENTISTS PROCEED IN THEIR RESEARCH FROM THE STANDPOINT OF MARXISM-LENINISM; WHILE THE PARTY DOES NOT WISH TO INTERFERE IN THE DETAILED WORK OF THE AN, THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF ITS WORK MUST BE DECIDED JOINTLY WITH IT; AN HAS BEEN GUILTY OF WASTED EFFORT AND FAULTY ASSIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES; IT SHOULD CLEAN HOUSE (UNDER PARTY DIRECTION), AND DO MORE IN APPLIED SCIENTIFIC WORK. AS ONE WOULD EXPECT, OTHER SPEAKERS DURING AN ANNIVERSARY FESTIVITIES ECHOED THIS LINE. WHILE IT IS TOO SOON TO SEE CONCRETE RESULTS, THE TONE OF CELEBRATION SPEECHES SEEMS TO SIGNAL MORE PARTY CONTROL (AS EXPRESSED FIRST IN MAY BY SUSLOV) OVER THE ACADEMY.

4. COMMENT: HISTORICALLY, AN HAS MAINTAINED THE APPEARANCE (SOMETIMES WITH AT LEAST SOME REASON) OF RELATIVE AUTONOMY. ITS ELECTIONS TO MEMBERSHIP (BY ITS ACTIVE MEMBERS) HAVE BEEN BY SECRET BALLOT. IT HAS TENDED TO PUT THE MAIN EMPHASIS OF ITS WORK ON PURE, AS OPPOSED TO APPLIED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH - IN CONTRAST TO THE STATE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WHICH HAS BEEN A MORE "PRACTICAL" RESEARCH GUIDANCE BODY - AND ITS MEMBERS MOSTLY HAVE BEEN LEFT FAIRLY FREE TO CARRY OUT THEIR OWN RESEARCH PROJECTS. IF POINTS MADE BY BREZHNEV IN HIS SPEECH ARE NOW IMPLEMENTED, THE AN WILL LOSE MUCH OF THE RELATIVE AUTONOMY ITS HAS HITHERTO ENJOYED. SINCE 1971 ITS MEMBERSHIP HAS TENDED TO ELECT AS NEW MEMBERS THOSE SCIENTISTS WHOSE PARTY CREDENTIALS WERE "APPROPRIATE." IT HAS NOT ELECTED SOME SCIENTISTS WHOSE WORK WOULD NORMALLY HAVE MADE THEM ELIGIBLE. WE EXPECT THIS TENDENCY WILL NOW CONTINUE OR EVEN BECOME STRONGER.

5. THE CELEBRATION WAS POSTPONED FROM ITS ORIGINAL DATE AT THE LAST MOMENT, PROBABLY OUT OF FEAR THAT A FEW MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY, AIDED BY OTHER DISSIDENTS AND WITH HELP FROM FOREIGN SCIENTISTS INVITED TO ATTEND, MIGHT PROTEST OR ORGANIZE COUNTER-SEMINARS. (THERE WERE NO PROBLEMS OF THIS SORT DURING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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JUBILEE, IN PART BECAUSE THE DISSIDENT MOVEMENT IS NOW WEAKER.) THE FACT THAT IT IS BEING HELD NOW INDICATES THAT THAT CONCERN NO LONGER OBTAINS, ALTHOUGH THE POSTPONEMENT -ORIGINALLY UNTIL NEXT MONTH, NOW LATER - OF THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT TO REPLACE KELDYSH (RETIRED FOR GENUINE HEALTH REASONS) INDICATES THAT THERE MAY STILL BE MORE PROBLEMS TO BE WORKED OUT AMONG A STILL RESTIVE MEMBERSHIP. THE COINCIDENCE OF THE CELEBRATIONS WITH THE AWARDED OF TWO NOBEL PRIZES TO ACADEMICIANS WHOSE VIEWS ARE AT

VARIANCE WITH THE KREMLIN LINE MAY SERVE TO GIVE HEART TO OTHER
INDEPENDENT-MINDED ACADEMICIANS.

6. THE CALL FOR MORE APPLIED WORK IS INDICATIVE OF THE PROBLEMS
THAT THE SOVIET SCIENTIFIC ESTABLISHMENT FACES IN PUTTING INTO
PRODUCTION ITS TECHNICAL ADVANCES. IT MAY WELL BE THAT AN
INCREASE IN DIRECT RELATIONS BETWEEN AN INSTITUTIONS AND
INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES, WHICH WE HAVE RECENTLY OBSERVED, WILL BE
STRENGTHENED AS A RESULT OF THE CALLS FOR CLOSER INVOLVEMENT OF
THE AN IN APPLIED TECHNOLOGY. GIVEN THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THE
LEADERSHIP HAS HAD WITH THIS PROBLEM, AS WELL AS ITS INTRINSIC
IMPORTANCE, WE ANTICIPATE THAT KEY DECISIONS CONCERNING SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY WILL HAVE TO BE MADE IN THE UPCOMING MONTHS AND
RATIFIED AT THE 25TH CPSU IN FEBRUARY. IN FACT, WE WOULD NOT BE
SURPRISED TO SEE A GENERAL REORGANIZATION OF THE ACADEMY AFTER
THE CONGRESS. ACADEMICIAN PETER KAPITSA TOLD THE UK SCI COUNSELOR
THAT MAY 1976 IS THE LIKELY DATE FOR A VISIT TO ENGLAND OF THE
NEW AN TOP LEADERSHIP. THIS COMMENT STRENGTHENS OUR IMPRESSION
THAT THE ACADEMY IS FACING CHANGES IN THE AN'S ORGANIZATION IN THE
WAKE OF THE CONGRESS.
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